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Sharpening Imperialist Dogfight Means

WAR, WAR, WAR

"It shocked me that the country was not mobilized for war." — U.S. Army General John Batiste, on the period between 9/11 and the Iraq invasion (NY Times, 6/4/06)

Challenges to U.S. imperialism are mounting. U.S. rulers will ultimately have to answer them with violence unseen since World War II. China is modernizing its military forces and plans to project them far beyond its borders. A new alliance, reaching from China through Central Asia to Russia, is about to embrace Iran. And in deals hostile to U.S. interests, Russia and Europe are consolidating their strategic industries.

U.S. rulers understand that maintaining their top-dog status will some day require them to fully mobilize society for war against major enemies. Under Bush, however, they've made little progress. They can't even field enough troops today to secure Iraq or wipe out al Qaeda. But we shouldn't let the Bush team's incompetence mask the rulers' objective needs. They will respond ruthlessly to threats to their survival. As the rivalry intensifies, we should expect, expose and combat the bosses' efforts to militarize the nation.

Until recently, Pentagon planners thought they had decades to prepare for a clash with China's vast forces. But a May 23 Department Of Defense (DOD) report to Congress warns, "Several aspects of China's military development have surprised U.S. analysts, including the pace and scope of its strategic forces modernization." Consequently, the DOD presses for a more urgent focus on China, which "has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States." The report notes that China's growing oil thirst is hastening prospects of war in many places:

"Beijing has pursued stronger relations with Angola, Central Asia, Indonesia, states in the Middle East (including Iran), Russia, Sudan, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe to secure long-term resource supply agreements. Some of these countries are also recipients of Chinese military technology. China has also strengthened ties to countries located astride key maritime transit routes (e.g., the Strait of Malacca). Evidence suggests that China is investing in maritime surface and sub-surface weapons systems that could serve as the basis for a force capable of power projection to secure vital sea lines of communication and/or key geostrategic terrain."

AN OPEC WITH BOMBS

China's rulers are rapidly building an anti-U.S. coalition. "Bringing together Russia, China and a number of Central Asian states, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [SCO] is evolving into a security and political bloc that could become a key global player with the clout to challenge NATO." (Toronto Star, 6/2/06) "Last year, more than 10,000 troops from SCO member countries participated in the group's first joint military exercises and another set of war games are planned for next year." Iran wants to join the club. President Ahmadiejad is expected to attend the June 13 SCO summit in Shanghai. According to David Wall, a professor at Cambridge University's East Asia Institute, "An expanded SCO would control a large part of the world's oil and gas reserves and nuclear arsenal. It would essentially be an OPEC with bombs." (Toronto Star)

Meanwhile, European bosses are exercising an anti-U.S. economic strategy. They seek to hand over a huge chunk of their steel industry — essential in war — to a company with close ties to the Kremlin. Mittal Steel, backed by U.S.- and British-based investors, had hoped to gobble up Europe's Arcelor and thereby become the world's biggest producer. But Arcelor is trying to derail the merger by selling a controlling share of itself to Russia's Severstal, which is run by "friends of Putin."

Arcelor CEO Guy Dolle emphasized the tilt away from Washington towards Moscow: "The links between Russia and Europe are very strong from an economic point of view, and there is no political problem." (Market Watch, 5/28/06). The links are strong indeed. Earlier this year, Germany's ex-chancellor Gerhard Schroeder became a top executive of Russian energy giant Gazprom.

U.S. Rulers Furious At Bush & Co. s Incompetence

But the actions of the Bush White House have failed to match the scope and pace of the sharpening rivalry. The U.S. ruling class is furious at Bush for not militarizing the masses or demanding wartime economic sacrifice. As a sign of their concern, the rulers have appointed one of their own, Henry Paulson, as Treasury Secretary to baby-sit the Bush gang for the rest of its tenure. Liberal Business Week magazine (6/13/06) hopes Paulson can curb Bush's penchant for debt and deficits and forestall a "financial meltdown" before a new president can whip the U.S. into imperialist shape. The conservative Wall Street Journal (6/1/06) insists that Paulson focus on "hardening the wartime dollar."

Facts are stubborn things. Even though Bush & Co. seem to ignore the inevitability of global conflict among the world's imperialists, we must not. Amid world war's horrors, history shows, lie the conditions for the working class's seizure of power. Building PLP is the most important weapon our class will have in achieving that goal.✪

New Orleans:

Workers Fight Bosses' Racism in Rebuilding Their Lives



NEW ORLEANS, LA. — A group of PLP college students kicked off our extended Summer Project here (see CHALLENGE, 6/7). We went to serve our class in the Gulf Region, where the crisis-ridden U.S. capitalist system — and its pillar of racism — is again exposed as one that cannot fulfill the needs of the working class. Ten months after Hurricane Katrina, residents, especially black workers, are still struggling to move back home and/or to get the vital help they need to survive.

We began by touring the levees near the French Quarter. They are supposed to protect the city during hurricanes or floods. The French Quarter, the business and garden districts and some other wealthy neighborhoods were all relatively vibrant, with no sign of hurricane damage.

The levees protecting these neighborhoods were well-built with primary and secondary levees to protect the French Quarter and the business district. Hotels and shopping centers are built atop these levees. Many working-class people who survived went to the nearby Convention Center, only to find no drinkable water there. But in the wealthier residential neighborhoods, life has returned to normal.

The racism built into the levee system hits you when you enter the working-class neighborhoods, where houses are no longer on foundations or where Katrina had moved them blocks away from their original sites. Every working-class neighborhood we saw had severe damage. The levees in these neighborhoods are merely walls compared to the system in the business and wealthy neighborhoods. There's no back-up system should the initial levees fail. Most workers' houses are right next to these "levees" that are supposed to protect them. During the early mornings, people who used to live there are working on the houses in these neighborhoods, but in the evenings they're ghost towns.

We attended a Memorial service and walk for residents who lost their lives in the predominately black 9th ward. The newly constructed levee, about three feet higher than the previous one, will still only withstand a Level Three hurricane. (Katrina was a Level Four.) This memorial was quite somber as they read the names of people who died. Rarely was there a family with only one name on the list.

Each morning during the week we shared our experiences and thoughts of the previous day and then analyzed how to do better in the coming day. Decisions were based on discussion, not on voting. Everyone was given equal time and encouraged to share their views on our activities.

Our grass roots organizing involved going door-to-door and/or telephoning survivors, listening and talking to them about their strug-

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Bush and Liberals Both Guilty of Imperialist Atrocities

Once again, the words "atrocity" and "war crimes" are becoming lead stories in the bosses' media coverage of the Iraq war. The murderous rulers and their flunkies in the liberal press are pretending to be scandalized over the brutal slaying of two dozen Iraqi civilians by U.S. Marines last November in Haditha and the U.S. military's more recent slaughter of two women, one pregnant.

CHALLENGE doesn't doubt that these atrocities happened. Everyone involved deserves the severest punishment: the Marines who pulled the trigger, the officers who ordered them or allowed them to do it, the commanders who gave these officers the green light, and, most of all, the politicians and their imperialist bosses, whose foul profit system makes war and the atrocities that accompany it inevitable.

The most conspicuous hand-wringing and the loudest cries of hypocritical outrage come from the same rulers who continue to plan for a future of endless, widening war to prevent Chinese, European, or Russian bosses from gaining a choke-hold on Persian Gulf oil. True, Bush has a lot of blood on his hands. But the liberals who are using Haditha to discredit him make him look like a novice in the murder department.

Facts, as the great communist revolutionary Lenin said nearly 100 years ago, are stubborn things. In Iraq alone, the liberal Clinton presidency's shameful record in piling up corpses far surpasses the current Bush administration's accomplishments. True, Bush, Sr. set the scene in the 1991 Gulf War. The bombing in that war "…devastated Iraq's civilian infrastructure, destroying 18 of 20 electricity-generating plants and disabling vital water-pumping and sanitation systems. Untreated sewage flowed into rivers used for drinking water, resulting in a rapid spread of infectious disease." (The Nation, 12/3/01) Tens, possibly hundreds of thousands of civilians died then. But the U.S. murder machine was just warming up. Under Clinton, eight years of economic "sanctions" added "new horrors of hunger and malnutrition" (Nation) and led to hundreds of thousands of additional civilian deaths, the majority of them children.

When an interviewer pointed out to Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that the 500,000 Iraqi children dead because of U.S. sanctions far exceeded the number of people killed by the U.S. nuclear bombing of Hiroshima in 1945, Albright replied: "…this is a very hard choice. But the price, we think, is worth it."

Albright's cynical but honest answer reflects the rulers' true attitude. To keep U.S. imperialism on top, they will pay any price in workers' blood. They've proved this time and again. Usually, it is the liberals who achieve the highest body counts. Clinton didn't stop in Iraq. He also bombed the former Yugoslavia back to the Stone Age, polluting the rivers and destroying the infrastructure there, with the same terrible consequences for civilians as in Iraq. The liberal Kennedy and Johnson administrations killed at least three million Vietnamese and another two million Laotians and Cambodians, in their ruthless drive to smash anti-U.S. forces in Southeast Asia. The liberal Democrat Truman ordered the atomic incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

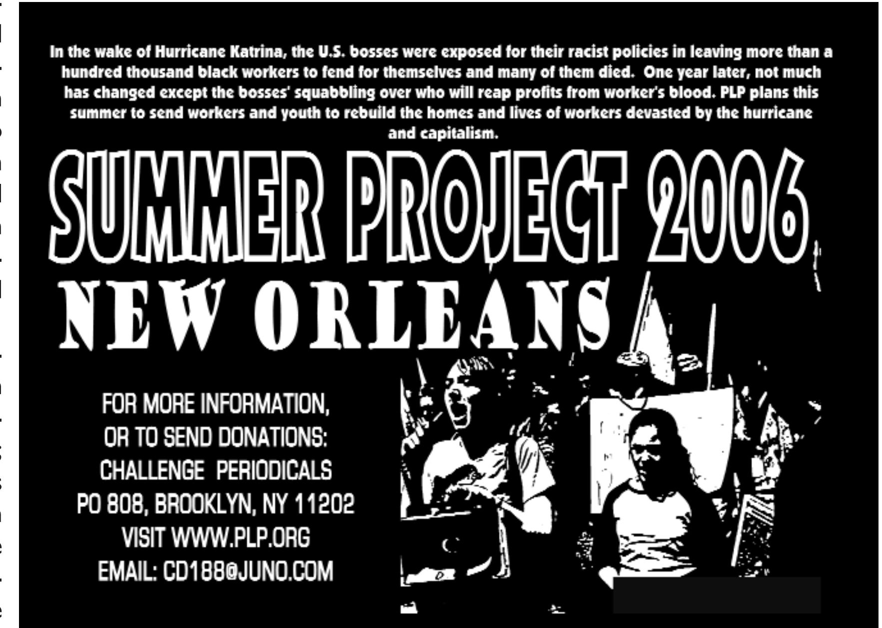
Between civilians, workers and soldiers whom U.S. imperialism has murdered outright in its wars; workers and others worldwide who've been killed, jailed, or otherwise terrorized by pro-U.S. dictatorships; and people who've succumbed to starvation or preventable disease because of the immense, global poverty that imperialism generates — for all these horrors the U.S. ruling class deserves first prize in the mass murderers' hall of shame, far outstripping even Hitler & Co.

Haditha should outrage us and stimulate us to organize militant action. But we should identify and attack the real enemy. One atrocity should not prevent us from seeing the forest from the trees. Haditha is not an exception, or an "aberration," as the bosses would love us to think. Atrocity and imperialism go hand in hand. In fact, imperialism is the real atrocity.

The liberal media are trying to manipulate mass anger at Haditha into a move to discredit Bush. Sure, Bush is a racist killer. But his real crime, in the liberals' eyes, is a failure to plan for an effective invasion of Iraq and his colossal inability to mobilize the U.S. population for this and future wars. (See editorial, front page)

These wars will make Bush's current crimes in Iraq look like misdemeanors. In part, the liberals are using Haditha to tell us: "Get used to it." But we must pursue the exact opposite of what their class wants, building the Progressive Labor Party and spreading its outlook that the only war worth fighting is class war to destroy imperialism.

That's why it's crucial to win soldiers to that outlook — away from being used as perpetrators of the ruling class's atrocities against our brother and sister workers worldwide. Clearly the only road to accomplish that goal is winning GI's to fight for communist revolution, the road that truly represents the interests of the international working class.✪



Red Ideas Reach Gitmo

I hope the following account can help show that a communist analysis of the world can be spread even under the most difficult circumstances.

A friend of PLP was in Kabul, Afghanistan, when the U.S. Army captured it. He's a small businessman who regularly travels between Kabul and Pakistan to trade commodities. He also wears a full beard and mustache (he thinks they make him look like Frederich Engels). He regularly attends the mosque because he thinks that if we communists aren't there, those who have faith in religious practices cannot be reached with true communist ideas.

Imperialism uses the term "atheist" to isolate revolutionary people from those dominated by religious mullahs. Our friend is a skillful communicator of communist ideas among religious people and has made many good friends.

Because, like many in the Taliban, he wears a beard he was seized by U.S. imperialist forces in Kabul and sent to the U.S.-run prison at Mazar Sharif and then to Guantanamo Bay. While in both camps, our friend discussed communist politics with the other prisoners. He explained how imperialism created the Taliban and served to protect it in the region. He pointed out that Osama bin Laden, Umar, Zawari and others were not engaged in a "sacred mission" but had followed CIA instructions when they acted against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. He also said that Afghanistan's pro-Soviet government had not been truly communist but was run by nationalist opportunists. To eliminate imperialism, he argued, one must join a party that is really struggling against oppression, exploitation, war, illiteracy, poverty, nationalism, fundamentalism and racism.

In his time in Mazar Sharif and Guantanamo, he found that some of his fellow prisoners were totally brainwashed and eager to die for religion, as taught to them by Osama & Co. They hated our friend's ideas because they were unable to think with their own minds. Others, however, were open to communist ideas. By pointing out that those who were now denouncing the U.S. had originally taken pay-offs from the CIA, he was able to expose the true essence of capitalism to sympathetic fellow prisoners.

After a year in Guantanamo Bay, the U.S. government decided that our friend was not a Taliban but merely a trader who regularly traveled to Kabul for business purposes. They transferred him but he suffered two more months of detention, interrogation, torture and sickness, before finally being released. Despite all this, he told us that his detention had been a good experience because of his discussions of communist ideas with other prisoners. He made some good friends who sympathize with his ideas and is still in contact with them.✪

International Red



WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead:" capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.

Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism — the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers. Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One International working class, one world, one Party.

Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers.



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New Orleans: Workers Fight Bosses' Racism in Rebuilding Their Lives

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gles and encouraging them to get active in rebuilding or helping out in their neighborhoods. Many survivors invited us into their homes and were very appreciative of us being there. One aim of the group we worked with was to build Survivor Councils. Everyone participated in the discussion but only survivors could make decisions on the course of action.

One Council proposal was to move residents back into a housing project. This was the focus of our organizing. Previously there were protests against bulldozing peoples' property without their knowledge. In these actions, residents were prepared to conduct citizen's arrests of the bulldozer drivers, and succeeded in stopping the bulldozing. The Council has already organized the taking back of an elementary school. They are planning to open it in August, without government help. Most of the Council's activities involve militant reform.

Our task, as always, is to fight alongside workers and help them learn that only communism will solve their problems. We joined survivors and volunteers to clean up the housing projects, enabling residents to move back home. As the day progressed, many other survivors came to help and wanted to get involved in fighting to rebuild their communities. We began developing ties with these volunteers with whom we shared CHALLENGE and discussed the need for workers to run society.

Our modest activity in organizing among our class and building a base for communist revolution caused some volunteers to look to us for political leadership. This helped provoke a discussion in the mass organization around the racism directed against immigrant workers coming here and the need to unite all workers against all forms of racism. (See front-page CHALLENGE editorial, 6/7.)

Many illusions held by workers in New Orleans were shredded by the racist nature of capitalism, but they still hold on to many others. Some workers still believe that the government will help them, while others lack faith that it will and instead are being won to the nationalist outlook that only black people united can win reforms from the system. In addition, the good work done by relief organizations is simultaneously building illusions that capitalism is fine; " it's just Bush and his cronies who are the problem." For the limited time we were in New Orleans, we strengthened our commitment to the fight for communism and started to lay the foundation for future struggles in winning workers to our Party, both survivors and volunteers. We all plan to return in greater numbers, to further our service to our class, train ourselves, learn from the workers in New Orleans and win more to our movement.✪

Trailer 'Parks' or Concentration Camps?

In the aftermath of hurricane Katrina, many residents from New Orleans were displaced around the country; some were moved to trailer parks along the Gulf Coast. On our recent trip there we visited some of these communities which resembled concentration camps rather than homes.

These "parks" are fenced in with armed guards constantly patrolling the grounds. Everyone entering must show ID and give the name and address of the person whom they wish to see. The people living there are the same victims who were left on their roofs for days, experienced the racist horror at the Convention Center, and had cops shoot at them or prevent them from crossing into other neighborhoods to seek safety. As one person said, these are the people left to die but since that didn't succeed, now there's no plan for them.

A survivor inside such a camp and who is pregnant with twins told us that people haven't received one bit of help from anywhere, aside from other workers. She described rapes, police brutality and blatant disrespect from the guards. When these workers meet to discuss the problems inside the camp and the lack of government help in moving them back home, the armed guards are always present.

The racism these workers faced before, during and after the storm mirrors the nature of capitalism. Fighting for these workers to return home isn't enough. We must also struggle against the racism that filled their lives before the hurricane and continues today.✪

Teachers Reject Anti-Communism, Elect PLP'er to Union Post

BROOKLYN, NY, May 31 — "My hope is not that you vote for me *despite* the fact that I'm a communist but, in some small way *because* I'm a communist," declared a PLP teacher running for union delegate at a central Brooklyn high school. The red-baiting incumbant then asked the teachers to, "Vote for a democratic process not a communist." Defying the incumbent's last-minute and openly anti-communist campaign, the rank and file gave the PL'er 60% of the votes, 38 to 25.

PLP has a long tradition of bringing anti-imperialist, pro-student and anti-fascist resolutions to the floor of the United Federation of Teachers monthly Delegate Assembly (DA) meetings. Adding new forces to the DA and making students a more regular presence there will inject new life into this important work.

Most crucially, a strong teacher collective is being built at this mainly black high school. Students are under increasing attack and teachers want to defend them. Each day students show up and "assume the position" for scanning and body searches. Every day most teachers show up with a smile and a solid lesson plan. But frustration sets in as each teacher fights his or her individual battles against illiteracy and arbitrary administrative intrusions on valuable time.

Teachers must see through the thick haze of racism and the sometime misplaced anger of young people who suffer a life where words like "future" and "opportunity" amount to little more than cruel jokes. We must unite with these students, their parents and teachers who will join us in being angry at such conditions.

Yet no union or reform will save us. Struggle will. The sooner we win more teachers and students to conclude that these racist conditions are an integral feature of capitalism, the closer our world will be to ending these conditions under communism.✪

GI's Learning Bosses' Oil War Is Not In Their Class Interest

For soldiers, struggles in the U.S. are initiated across military bases and armories. When imperialists send us soldiers to war, the struggle is intensified. From this I gained invaluable political experience in Iraq.

My first reaction to being deployed to an unjustified war was anger and devastation because it meant saying good-bye to family and friends, exactly what every soldier was feeling. Therefore, it wasn't difficult to find friends who thought like me. I discovered that soldiers' anger existed prior to being deployed, just as my hatred of imperialism seemed to have existed since first learning how capitalism worked. Our "job" as soldiers was to "defend democracy," a notion spread by the media. Fortunately, many disagreed with it.

Serious conversations with soldiers occurred, involving important issues about this war. The word imperialism was commonly discussed among my friends. One buddy completely agreed that this war was for oil. He even surprised me when speaking about the goal of "democracy" in Iraq. When I explained that democracy doesn't even work in the U.S., he interrupted me with the question, "Phil, you know what the ideal system is?" I paused, since I had only known this guy for a couple of weeks. "Communism!" he declared.

I was astonished, thinking perhaps I wasn't too far from home. This same thing happened with another person as well. This motivated me to develop more buddies among these soldiers.

When I settled into my unit, I made new friends. Early on, most soldiers truly believed this deployment was a humanitarian effort. By the end, this attitude changed drastically. Soldiers experienced two elections in Iraq that exposed democracy as a farce. Clearly what was being established in Iraq wouldn't change the wretched living conditions of Iraqi workers.

For example, a 15-year-old Iraqi the Army employed inside a base to dispose of waste was only "paid" with a hot lunch and a take-home dinner. His two Iraqi supervisors earned a mere $8 a day. I told my buddies this "democracy" can't improve the well-being of the average Iraqi worker. When we cruised around the city playing cop, targets for IED's (Improvised Explosive Devices), it was apparent that this war and its justifi-



cation was a complete sham.

As we prepared to return home, the Army tried to scare us before we got back, lecturing us on "political etiquette." We were told that demonstrating against the U.S. government, either verbally or physically, can get soldiers in trouble. They showed us pictures of anti-war demonstrators, labeling them "unpatriotic." A friend of mine, who had read CHALLENGE, told those around him that by all means he was guilty of being unpatriotic. Afterwards a soldier told me he was planning to join the Veterans Against the War organization.

These experiences teach many lessons that soldiers and workers worldwide can grasp. The bottom line is that imperialist wars are against the interest of the working class. Developments in Iraq reveal the empty promises of capitalism and its "democracy." Soldiers return home hating the war, just as Iraqi and U.S. workers are becoming disenchanted with capitalism, our common enemy. And we have a common goal to rid us of this enemy — communism.

Bush's announcement that the National Guard will patrol the U.S.-Mexico border provoked some pretty interesting and angry discussions in my unit. Most people thought they wouldn't dare send our unit or others there. One friend said, "If they send me to patrol the border, they'll have a million more immigrants marching because that's how many I'll help to come in."✪

RED SOLDIER

Joint Worker-Student Struggle Reveals Importance of Red Politics

"Management and politicians don't care about us… they only help themselves when they pretend to help us," a worker told a recent meeting of campus groundskeepers, students and union organizers. The meeting was called by a coalition of workers and students organized earlier in the year to end subcontracting on campus. A discussion over tactics erupted into sharp political struggle, which helped expose many shortcomings of reformism in — and the importance of communist politics to — the class struggle.

Union leaders claimed they had made closed-door deals with certain legislators to add money for the workers to next year's budget. Yet, the precondition was that workers and students would cancel their scheduled actions on campus and patiently wait for a final decision.

Many workers argued against waiting on these politicians. One worker warned that, "Politicians are hypocrites, and only look out for themselves. If it wasn't an election year, and if we weren't embarrassing the Chancellor, they wouldn't even address us at all."

A student added, "We can't put our fate in the hands of politicians — our strength is in our own hands." Other students pointed out that the movement's success so far stemmed from the unity between workers and students, not from pleading with politicians and administrators. Although it was finally decided to postpone actions for the week, the sharp debate and struggle helped strengthen the political consciousness and confidence of many workers and students. It became clear to some that workers need to organize to put power in their own hands, not count on the bosses and politicians to give them a few more crumbs from the capitalist table.

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The year-long fight to end subcontracting on campus has been an intense and immensely difficult struggle. Rallying students to stand by workers in fighting exploitation proved challenging at first. Yet, in using the slogans "The workers' struggle is the students' struggle," and "An injury to one is an injury to all," many students began making the connections.

Facing higher tuition fees, cuts in services and financial aid, and military recruitment on campus, students realized that the workers' slave wages, lack of healthcare and pensions, and the terrible working conditions of subcontracted labor stem from the same root as the attacks on them: the profit system and imperialist wars to dominate capitalist competitors.

Among the students, much struggle emerged throughout the year on reformist vs. revolutionary politics. Some argued that being "practical" and "focused" on the issue at hand was important. They suggested that the coalition's message should omit political points not immediately apparent. But others emphasized the importance of exposing the racism against immigrant (mostly Latino) and black workers used to justify outsourcing and of linking the so-called "budget crisis" to U.S. imperialist wars for profit and domination. They stressed the importance of viewing this particular struggle as one front in the larger fight between workers and bosses worldwide.

Leaflets were distributed linking the campus struggle to the disaster in New Orleans and the brutal and racist nature of capitalism that Katrina so clearly revealed, as well as to the racist attacks on immigrant workers. Teach-ins and actions exposed many students to the racist and oppressive realities of capitalist exploitation and imperialist war.

Hopefully the summer will provide the time to strengthen many of the political relationships begun throughout the year, among both students and workers. Several students are now reading CHALLENGE and will be invited to participate in PLP's Summer Projects. We will continue to build communist politics on an individual level, while expanding CHALLENGE networks and recruiting to the Party. Out of this struggle, which has exposed the racist, anti-worker nature of capitalism, more students and workers need to join PLP and commit to the long-term fight to end this system of racism and imperialism with communist revolution.✪

Boot Racism Out of Football's World Cup

On June 9, the World Cup of Soccer began in Germany. It is the world's largest sporting event, watched by billions around the globe. Ideologically, it promotes nationalism by rooting for the team from your "home" country, although ironically the European professional teams recruit black and Latino players from some of the world's poorest regions. Inevitably racism rears its ugly head in countries like the Netherlands and England where neo-Nazis organize racist acts.



During this World Cup, fascist organizations are upping the ante. The New York Times reported (6/4) a recent influx of African and Latin American players — now signed by European teams — have become the target of racist attacks. On March 25, in Hamburg, Germany, Adebowale Ogungbure, a native of Nigeria, was verbally assaulted with "racial remarks and mocked with monkey noises." Ogungbure responded by signaling to those fans that they really are Nazis.

In a February 25th game in Zaragoza, Spain, choruses of racist chants attacked Barcelona's Samuel Eto, one of the most vocal opponents of racism, provoking Eto to threaten to walk off the field. Similar attacks have been aimed at other players throughout Europe. FIFA, the World Cup's governing body, says it wants to minimize such incidents at this year's event. (Of course, the Times is quick to point out such racism abroad while downplaying the racism permeating U.S. society, using terms like "biased, bigoted, or prejudice" to describe blatant racism here.)

Racism has been rising in Europe where the bosses have been using immigrant workers from around the world as cheap labor. In the same Times' article, Piara Powar, an anti-racist activist, said the underlying reasons for these racist attacks are "poverty [and] unemployment.... Often newcomers bear the brunt of the blame" for these problems.

Workers worldwide should shoot down the bosses' nationalism with internationalism — the idea that workers everywhere have the same class interest in opposing the world's bosses, no matter what their origin. Capitalism causes the poverty and unemployment from which the bosses reap maximum profits and control global markets to exploit workers internationally. Ultimately, workers face the most murderous expression of capitalism when the ruling classes use workers and youth to fight their imperialist wars. The workers' real goal worth shooting for is communism.✪

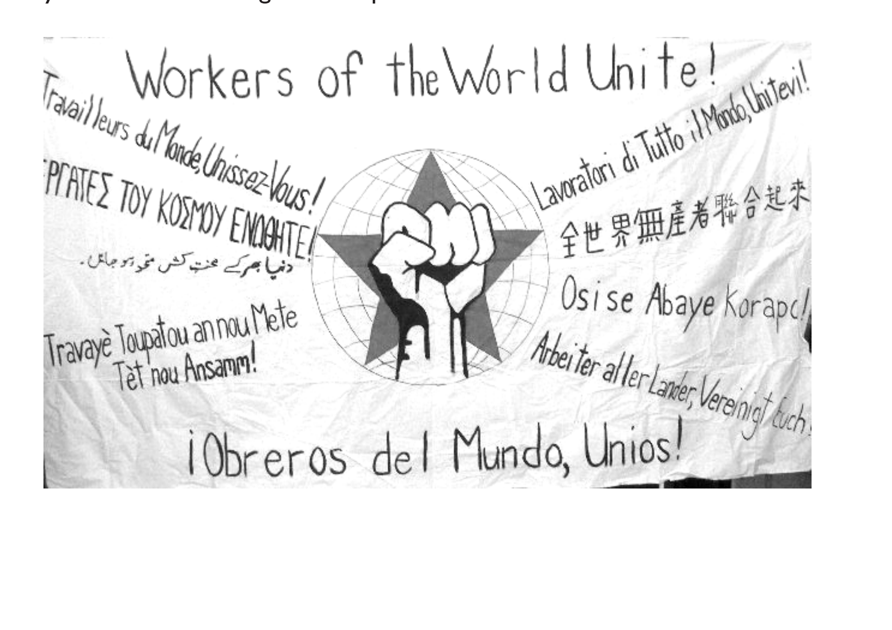
Working-Class Internationalism BBQ's Nationalism at PLP Cook-out

BROOKLYN, NY, May 29 — There's a long communist tradition in Brooklyn of reversing the bosses Memorial Day orgy of patriotism with our big May Day cookout in Prospect Park. This year's event exceeded expectations with groups of teenagers materializing throughout the day. New friends manned the grill, organized sports and volunteered to travel out to Suffolk County, Long Island in late June for an important trial of PLP members arrested last summer while confronting anti-immigrant scum in Farmingville.

The day's highlight was a pick-up soccer game involving our group and a neighboring Mexican family. We shared DESAFIO with these workers. They immediately agreed to mix the teams — "no discrimination, we don't like that crap" was the talk around the grill afterwards.

The "natural" thing would have been for our group to play their group, for black to play Mexican. History's most racist ruling class shapes mass consciousness in the U.S. today. Communist ideas bucked that nationalism. Just as the bosses seem to have an infinite number of ways to attack us, we have an equally infinite number of ways to fight back.

Several comrades were leaving for New Orleans the following day to open a summer of political organizing there. This is the same New Orleans where the minimum wage has been suspended and Latino immigrants working on reconstruction "jobs" are kept in what amounts to concentration camps on the heels of what honest observers can only call an attempted genocide against that city's black population. Our experience in Prospect Park should remind them, and us all, that working-class internationalism lies just beneath the surface in our neighbors and remains the unspoken aspiration of the world's toiling masses.✪



NSA SQUABBLE EXPOSES BOSSES' CLASS DICTATORSHIP



Three phone companies have given tens of millions of customer phone records to the National Security Administration (NSA). So what else is new, you ask? It's absolutely true that fascism is growing in the U.S. But there's more to these media exposés than meets the eye.

In the 1970's, the Nixon Administration spied on anti-war activists and other political opponents, including the Democrats. When Nixon was dumped, the FBI was temporarily put on a leash, partly to ensure it wasn't used against ruling-class agents again. A modified surveillance system, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), was established under President Carter. FISA set up a secret court, initially to be used mainly to investigate Soviet and other spies stationed in the U.S. After the Soviet Union's collapse, the bosses changed the focus of their spying.

U.S. rulers had already decided they couldn't allow other imperialists to control Mid-East oil. Meanwhile, al Qaeda and others openly declared their intentions to drive the U.S. out. Clinton & Co. used the 1993 World Trade Center bombing to justify more spying on Muslim immigrants. A 1996 law signed by Clinton allowed the FBI to apply to the FISA court for authorization to spy on those supposedly connected to "Foreign Terrorist Organizations."

Government applications for warrants soared. The secret court almost never turned down an application. But the FBI and their cohorts were just warming up. After 9/11, the USA Patriot Act gave the bosses' government new powers to spy on immigrants and citizens, even if little was related to "foreign terrorism." The FISA secret court tried to limit this power, but its ruling was overturned by FISA's secret appeals court.

After 9/11, the USA Patriot Act gave the bosses government new powers to spy on immigrants and citizens, even if little was related to foreign terrorism.

This still was not enough for Bush & Co. They wanted to have their own surveillance, independent of the secret court. This is a no-no for liberal rulers, who remember what happened under Nixon, and who want no "loose-cannon" operations. These liberal bosses want everything to go through their FISA. The rulers want to ensure there's enough support amongst the population for spying programs, before they "reluctantly" permit "necessary measures to protect the public."

Even the "exposure" of the NSA program by USA Today has two sides. While everyone now knows about the surveillance — and the Democrats have criticized "infringements on our civil liberties" — still, many Senators, including key Democrats, had had knowledge of, and approved, the spying. While they attack the NSA's national database, they hypocritically support a national data-base of all workers as part of the immigration bills now being debated. Unfortunately, there's been little protest by workers and others. The connection between attacks on immigrants and citizens should be made clearer to more workers.

Members and friends of PLP should see these latest developments as a new challenge. We must organize our friends and co-workers, with a greater sense of urgency. The process of defeating passive acceptance of fascism will be slow. However, the bosses' in-fighting gives us more ammunition.

Lenin said the state machinery is a tool in the hands of the exploiters. As the fog of U.S. bourgeois democracy lifts, its system is more exposed as a dictatorship of the capitalist class. We must mobilize working-class anger wherever it exists. Small rivers of class struggle can become streams of communist-led working class resistance.✪

GI Movement Stirs from Its Slumber

Sixty people organized by a local Amnesty International Chapter and Veterans for Peace, including almost a dozen active-duty military personnel, met to discuss the lessons of the Vietnam-era GI movement and to plan strategy for the current emerging GI movement. David Cortright, author of "Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War" (recently republished by Haymarket Books), and himself a GI activist in the late 1960's, gave the keynote address. Vietnam-era GI newspapers were displayed, along with current GI and veterans' literature. Approximately 30 attendees took CHALLENGE.

Cortright presented a compelling case for a vigorous, outspoken movement of active-duty soldiers, sailors and marines. He told numerous stories about resistance during the Vietnam War, ranging from anti-war petitions to "fraggings" (killing by a fragmentation grenade) of officers by their "own" men in Nam. He also described the militant anti-racist uprisings back then, concluding by calling on civilians and soldiers to join together to fight against U.S. imperialism.

The audience vigorously applauded Cortright, and questioned him from many perspectives. One participant noted that racism towards the Vietnamese then (and towards Iraqis now) strengthens the racism within the armed forces against African Americans and Latinos. Another called on active-duty personnel and veterans to join with anti-war public health workers next year in Boston in fighting the do-nothing leadership of the American Public Health Association, noting that Iraq Veterans against the War led the heckling of war criminal John Kerry at last year's convention.

Several audience members worried that GI's would face severe repression for speaking out, wondering what could be done. Cortright argued that only a substantial group, built over an extended period, should "go public" opposing the brass and the government, and even then should be prepared with lawyers and a civilian publicity base to make the biggest splash possible to limit the repression.

A member of Iraq Veterans against the War cautioned that it was critical for GI activists to build a clandestine network within the military in preparation for future struggles, as well as have certain open actions, since the government would try to crush any activism, just as it did in Vietnam.

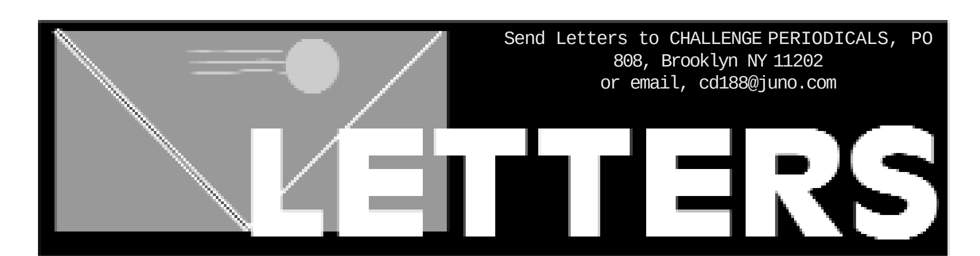
Another questioner earnestly asked Cortright for his strategic views on how the broader anti-war and GI movement could actually change things, like stopping the war, instead of just "taking a stand." He said the Congressional election in November, which the Republicans might well lose, would help, as well as the presidential election in 2008, although he quickly noted that Democrats hadn't been much better than Republicans. He did feel, however, that the declining popularity of the war and of Bush provides an opening for more vigorous activity by people in and out of the service in opposing the war.

At this point, a PLP er who had been part of the GI movement during the Vietnam War rose to speak about imperialism as not simply a Bush or neocon policy, but a necessity for the entire U.S. ruling class.

At this point, a PLP'er who had been part of the GI movement during the Vietnam War rose to speak about imperialism as not simply a Bush or neocon policy, but a necessity for the entire U.S. ruling class. The Iraq war, he continued, was just the beginning of many and larger wars which inevitably grow out of sharpening rivalry among imperialists like China, the European Union and the U.S. for control of the world's oil reserves and for overall economic and political dominance. The PL'er said that the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), a leading force in the Democratic Party (including Hilary Clinton), had just published a book calling for an imperial strategy in the Middle East more thoroughgoing than the Bush neo-conservatives had advocated. He concluded that the best road for the GI movement was building towards revolution through political education and daily struggle against the brass at whatever level could be achieved, and rejecting the electoral strategy.

An active-duty soldier then asked if the many reforms that Cortright had argued for in his book, such as a formal ombudsman for grievances, had done any good, since he hadn't seen any evidence of them, and that perhaps a revolutionary approach might make sense. Cortright responded that, in fact, almost none of the reforms temporarily won during the Vietnam GI movement had really stuck. He said that both reform and revolution were necessary to end imperialism.

While the meeting ended on that note, the "meeting after the meeting" then began, with the active duty personnel, Cortright, veterans, and a PLP'er. They discussed what could be done at their base to launch a GI movement. Many ideas were floated, including launching a clandestine newsletter, holding study groups on revolution, and urging more people to apply for conscientious objector status. The PLP'er noted that it had been over 30 years since he had seen this kind of active-duty gathering, including African American, Latino and white soldiers united in figuring out how to rebuild the GI movement, and that this group had great potential power to confront U.S. imperialism. So stay tuned for the re-birth of the GI movement!✪



U.S. War on Mexico Caused Emigration

A May 10 CHALLENGE article sharply criticized patriotic Los Angeles radio announcers for urging immigrant workers to be grateful to the "great country that has given you everything." The article correctly pointed out that the bosses never give; they just take.

It reminded me of a "taking" rarely noted in the bosses' media or history classes: in 1846, the U.S. Army under President James Polk, a slave-holder from Tennessee, invaded Mexico on a flimsy pretext, murdering tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians on the way to Mexico City. They looted and destroyed the countryside as they went.

After Mexico's surrender, the U.S. imperialists annexed (stole) from the Mexicans all of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah, and parts of Colorado, Oregon, Wyoming and Idaho — 1.2 million square miles in all!

Apologists for this conquest have always liked to call it "Manifest Destiny," the idea that the U.S. was "entitled" to rule as much of the continent as it could acquire by stealing it. In fact, it was an early example of vicious U.S. imperialism.

Much of the impoverishment of Mexico's people can be traced to this bloody theft. And after all, poverty has always been one of the leading causes of emigration.

A Reader

Airport Workers Fight Sexist, Racist Attacks

There's been a sharp fight by airport workers in our SEIU local against sexual harassment of immigrant workers. It started when eight women workers from Mexico and Central America filed a class action suit against ABM, a major contractor for Northwest Airlines. Now more than 20 workers have come forward to say that, to keep their jobs, they were harassed, touched or coerced into having sex with their supervisors. The union was not involved before the suit and has done little since.

Workers also distributed union fliers condemning sexual harassment and calling for a meeting to discuss this racist and sexist attack. CHALLENGE readers and distributors circulated a PLP leaflet. The bosses have failed to intimidate workers from fighting back.

At a meeting before work, which included U.S.-born and immigrant workers from Central America and Africa, one worker explained that sexism is a political weapon the bosses use to super-exploit women workers and attack us all. We discussed how these were racist attacks, singling out women from Latin America. A PLP member pointed out that the union is also a bosses' tool and that communist revolution is needed to destroy capitalism, the source of racism and sexism.

Red Airport Worker

Today's Navy Mirrors Old Jim Crow Racism!

My parents were both born in the South before 1950. Segregation was everywhere. Blacks had to ride the back of the bus and sit in the "colored only" section of eateries. In certain parts of South Carolina, blacks couldn't even smile in public. The racist system had an instrument known as "laughing barrels" for blacks to put their head in to laugh so that when they came up in the face of whites, they wouldn't be smiling. This was the apartheid south from the end of Reconstruction all the way up to the 1960's and beyond.

I was born in the South in the post-Civil Rights era and never experienced much of this culture, partly because I was raised in a 70% black city. But the Navy is a time machine — I'm experiencing what my parents did.

There are enlisted barbershops and officer barbershops, ladder wells for officers and ladder wells for enlisted. Even more extreme, the ship's captain and executive officer (#2 in command) each has his own personal separate ladder well! There's a mess hall for enlisted and a wardroom (eatery) for officers. They even have a mess hall for first class Petty Officers (E6) to separate them from the E1-E5 enlisted personnel and separate sleeping facilities for lower enlisted, crammed into small bunks, middle enlisted getting a bigger bunk and officers getting their own rooms.

I recently had the duty of cleaning senior officers' rooms, making their beds, vacuuming their floors and taking their dirty uniforms to the laundry. Our boss, a first class (E6), would allow us to eat the officers' food, but only in a small room off to the side, while acting invisible.

I finally can feel first-hand what my grandparents in South Carolina and Georgia endured before the Civil Rights movement. I refused the officers' food and preferred eating with the enlisted. I won some of my shipmates to join me rather than be treated as second-class sailors.

The segregation on the ship mirrors the segregation in U.S. capitalist society, still segregated today by class and, in practice, by skin color as well. Class, one's relationship to the means of production, determines housing, education and a person's way of life. This segregation will continue until we can organize workers to develop the same mass anger towards class segregation as the generation before had towards Jim Crow/racial segregation.

Build the Party. We have a world to win!

Navy Red

Won't Learn History From U.S. Rulers

According to news reports, immigrant workers will be required to learn U.S. history. Actually, many in the U.S. need to learn about capitalism's real history here. Capitalist culture works overtime to keep people ignorant of history, as well as of most things.

The PLP pamphlet "Jailbreak" explains that capitalism teaches us to think in a superficial fashion or not at all. It's frightening that our consciousness is somewhat shaped by TV commercials, which bombard us daily with mindless consumerism. No doubt the PL pamphlet should be read by as many workers as possible, as a first step in learning how to combat the ignorance the ruling class shoves down our throats.

Certainly immigrants, as well as all workers, should learn history — the history of oppressed people fighting back against capitalism, that is. Such history can help us understand what's needed in the fight to overthrow the profit system and to learn real critical thinking skills.

That's not what the bosses' politicians have in mind when they say immigrants should study U.S. history. Their idea is aimed at turning immigrants into "good citizens" who will be "thankful" to be living and working in U.S. capitalist society, one that does, in fact, foster ignorance of not only history as a process but also of everything else.

I can only shake my head in disgust at this call by the oppressors for immigrants to study history. In reality, it's up to communists to bring our real history to workers, as we struggle to make history. So perhaps CHALLENGE could have some articles on U.S. history, such as ones on the lives of Harriet Tubman or Frederick Douglas or on labor struggles.

There's definitely a need right now for the red leadership that PL is battling to provide in the immigrants rights movement.

Red Coal

CHALLENGE COMMENT: Your points are well taken. Thanks for the suggestion. We might add that we have printed several articles on major strikes and labor rebellions as well as short biographies on figures like Paul Robeson and other working-class heroes. We will try to publish more.

Racism Runs Riot on French TV

On May 29, the state-run French TV network A2 depicted rioting in Kabul, Afghanistan, as having been caused by "a run-of-the-mill traffic accident" involving U.S. troops in a Humvee. Obviously, there's nothing "run-of-the-mill" about a heavy, armored Humvee racing at high speed, squashing cars and causing numerous deaths and injuries. So how come French TV misrepresented these events?

It's probably because of the racism — conscious or unconscious — of French TV news reporters who have a stereotype in their heads of Muslims as being "excitable" and "emotional." This racist garbage gets broadcast on TV and pollutes millions of minds. It makes Afghans seem "unreasonable" and tends to let the U.S. military off the hook — another case of blaming the victim. This is just one small example of what runs rampant in the world every day. It shows that racism is a worldwide phenomenon because capitalism produces racist ideas. The only way to get rid of racism is to get rid of capitalism.

A friend in France

Vision of Future Key to Overcoming Obstacles

I like the name change of the "Under Communism" column to "Forward to Communism." I assume it's a response to the critique in the April 26 issue.

I agreed with much of the critique, although I felt it didn't give enough weight to the importance of having a vision to fight for. That is, while it's very relevant that there are tremendous obstacles to achieving the type of society we aspire to, it's more relevant that it's worth aspiring to a communist egalitarian society in the first place. It seems poor motivation to fight simply to endure decades of death and destruction (regardless of the fact that it is inevitable). It is clear that predicting bliss in "less than 20 years" (my childhood memory) was wrong and counterproductive. But the opposite prediction, that conditions will inevitably be miserable for decades after the event, seems equally unproductive.

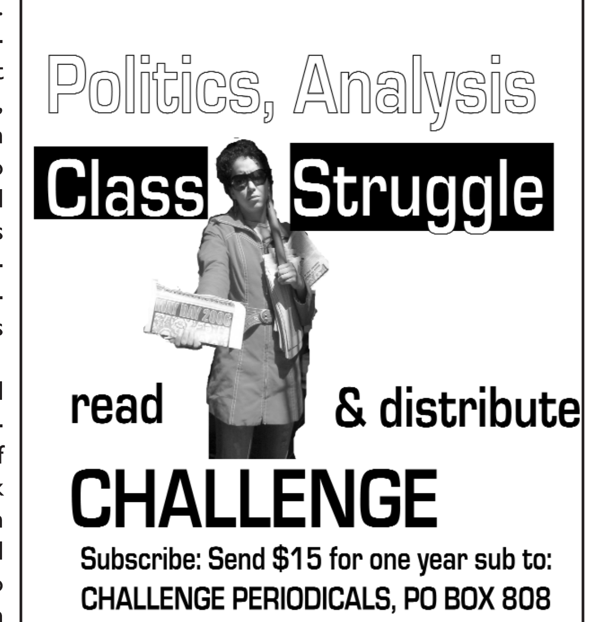
The reality is that history only provides an educated guess as to what the future holds. We have only a general idea of what it holds and should be prepared to take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself.

In our analysis, one of the biggest mistakes in the past was that communist parties in Russia and China were overly pessimistic about the ability of the masses to fight directly for communism without the intermediate step of socialism. They held back advances because of this pessimistic estimate. Why set ourselves up again to fail?

To me, keeping one's eye on the ball is the only way to hit a home run. The ball, of course, is the kind of society we want to build, not the obstacles to doing it. If, as is predicted, there are decades of misery and pain to endure, only a vision will hold us to the task of maintaining the struggle. I don't foresee everyone suddenly saying, "Oh man, this is jive. You told me it would be easy. I quit."

Still, I think the name change is good, and there's nothing wrong with including a balanced discussion of how the struggle might proceed, including some more optimistic scenarios.

A Comrade



Baghdad Comes to New Orleans

On a recent trip to New Orleans I drove through the 9th ward. At 5 PM the neighborhood is deserted. Nine months after hurricane Katrina devastated the city's primarily black working-class neighborhoods, the 9th ward looks more like a war zone than a place where people could live. (Indeed, someone had scrawled "Baghdad" on the side of an abandoned home.)

Many houses were blown off their foundations when the flood hit; some were flung hundreds of feet. Those

Continued on page 7

LETTERS CONTIN-

homes near the levee when it broke were wiped out entirely. When standing next to the new levee and looking out across the surrounding area, one sees miles of devastation.

Two days later a hurricane survivor took me and several other volunteers to where her parents' home once stood. Though the house was nowhere to be seen, her memories described a vibrant working-class community. Being exposed to the human effect of the levee breech made clear to me the genocidal nature of this disaster. Whether the New Orleans ruling class dynamited the levee or simply built it so poorly that it was destined to break, they intentionally wiped out the 9th ward and killed thousands. Many who escaped death now live in concentration camp-style trailer "parks." (See box, page 3.)

The survivor, several other volunteers and I talked with other residents about how the working class can fight these racist attacks. For now, survivors are struggling to reclaim their communities. It's up to PLP to show that ultimately only armed struggle against capitalism can prevent further genocides like this one.

RED VOLUNTEER

College Students, Faculty Confront Racist Minutemen

A multi-racial group of 60 college students and faculty confronted eleven Minutemen — protected by campus cops — as they attempted to disrupt an outdoor teach-in on this campus. The anti-racists chanted "Smash racists, Smash all borders!" and "Down, down with the MinuteKlan… Up, up with the workers!"

Many students passing by joined the chanting crowd, visibly upset by the presence of open racists on their campus, while others verbally challenged the Minutemen. One speaker called for physically stopping the racists. While this didn't happen, it led many students to discuss how best to deal with them.

The teach-in was organized to support the struggle against racism. Unable to intimidate students with their racist signs and flag-waving, the Minutemen resorted to yelling at speakers and distributing leaflets, which passers-by immediately crumpled and threw away. They were clearly unwelcome. However, the crowd eagerly accepted the anti-racist students' leaflets which exposed the fascism of the Minutemen/gutter racists backing the Sensenbrenner bill, as well as the liberal racist McCain-Kennedy phony "alternative." The Minutemen and their cop protectors finally gave up and left while the students continued their meeting.

The anti-racist leaflets advocated citizen-immigrant unity against the attacks on all workers. They explained how the ruling class uses racism and nationalism to try to divide and weaken workers' struggles, enabling them to exploit us in factories and sweatshops while urging us to fight and die for their imperialist profit wars.

A black student who took the leaflet compared the racist Minutemen to the Klan in the Jim Crow South, linking anti-immigrant racism to anti-black racism. This connection is important; it's no accident the bosses are spreading racism against immigrants to divide the potentially most militant and revolutionary sections of the U.S. working class: super-exploited black and Latino workers. Racism is the lifeblood of capitalism, but also its main weakness. All workers and students must oppose racism against immigrant and black workers in order to strengthen the unity and power of the entire working class.

Several of the student speakers emphasized that the only way to fight racism and imperialism is by building a multi-racial, international fighting movement of workers, students and soldiers. A Latino student tied the bosses' cops and courts to the fascist Minutemen they protect. He said anti-immigrant racism is an attack on all workers, used to lower wages and cut pensions in all industries. An Asian-American student noted how racist police terror affected all working-class communities, including his. A Muslim student exposed the hypocrisy of labeling immigrant workers "illegal" given the global criminal actions perpetrated by U.S. imperialism. Another student attacked the liberal McCain-Kennedy bill and the bosses' plan to use immigrant "guest workers" as slave labor in the fields and factories and immigrant youth as cannon fodder. She called the Minutemen's U.S. flags a symbol of racism, imperialism and exploitation, and argued that workers and students should fight to smash all borders.

Afterward, many students discussed how best to fight racism and growing fascism. While many mentioned pacifism and non-violent tactics, others advanced the idea of physically preventing the fascists from marching and speaking on our streets, communities and campuses. It's up to workers and students to stop these racists from spewing their hate-mongering lies and terror.

Several students received CHALLENGE for the first time and were open to its communist politics. Hopefully, these continuing campus struggles will help move them and others to read CHALLENGE regularly, and to fight alongside PLP for communist revolution to destroy the source of racism — the profit system.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS

Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly (UK)



New Orleans is again designed to fail

…The Army Corps of Engineers has all but completed its repairs to this city's ruined levee system….

But even though all sides agree that the corps has largely achieved its goal, independent engineers say it is the goal that is the real problem. New Orleans is still very much at risk, they say, because the level of protection the corps has reached is still not as strong as the city needs….

"Some of these things were poorly designed and were almost pre-ordained to fail,"….

Professor Seed and other experts who have studied the crazy quilt of levees, flood walls, pumps and gates that have been in the process of being built for more than 40 years now say that they were never adequate to protect hundreds of thousands of people in an urban setting and that the levees themselves are now known to be fundamentally flawed….

Maj. Gen. Don T. Riley, the director of civil works for the corps, said he could not guarantee that the system would not fail again….

Gen. Robert Crear, the head of the Mississippi Valley Division of the corps, said "We know Katrina was not the worst possible case." (NYT, 4/25)

US job security is now a fairytale

For an unnecessarily large number of Americans, the workplace has become a hub of anxiety and fear…in which you might be shown the door at any moment….

Since 1984, when the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics started monitoring "worker displacement," at least 30 million full-time workers have been "permanently separated from their jobs and their paychecks against their wishes."

At the heart of the layoff phenomenon is the myth, endlessly repeated by corporate leaders and politicians of both parties, that workers who are thrown out of their jobs can save themselves, can latch onto spiffy new jobs by becoming better educated and acquiring new skills….

That is just not so….The reality is that there are not enough good jobs currently available…. (NYT, 5/25)

Kids define a sentence: 5 to 10 years

Go to schools and ask youngsters for a show of hands if they have a father, mother, brother, uncle or anyone close to them in prison. In many cities and suburbs, most kids' hands go up. And small wonder: more than 2 million Americans are behind bars, the most — in absolute numbers, and share of the population — of any nation on earth.

Or ask kids: "What's a sentence?" Ideally, they'd reply it's a group of words with a subject and predicate. But no, in many schools the reply is quite different: "Five to Ten years. (Washington Post, 5/21)

Still widespread, trafficking = slavery

…The demand for prostitutes (here in New York and elsewhere) is much greater than the supply of women who want to be prostitutes. So trafficking, the coercion of women and young girls into the sex trade, is a flourishing industry.

The toll that trafficking takes is often horrific. In addition to the forced prostitution, the women and children who are the victims of trafficking become part of a landscape in which drug addiction, disease, mental health problems, beatings and violent death are commonplace….

…Trafficking…is really about humans being bought and sold as commodities — not just in the commercial sex trade, but also in exploitative labor situations on farms and in factories and sweatshops.

Trafficking is much more widespread than most people realize. As the advocacy group Sanctuary for Families has pointed out, "In our backyards and communities, a slave trade is flourishing that makes a mockery our belief in civil and human rights." (NYT, 6/1)

Afghanistan success looks a lot like Iraq

Something has gone alarmingly wrong in Afghanistan, previously touted as the Bush administration's one quasi-successful venture in nation building….

The warning signs go well beyond last week's deadly outbreak of anti-American rioting in Kabul — the worst violence there since the Taliban were evicted from Afghanistan's capital in 2001. And Kabul is widely acknowledged to be the most secure place in Afghanistan.

The past few months have also seen a stronger than expected Taliban military revival (with open help from supporters in Pakistan)….

Armed militia commanders still rule many areas. Some provincial cities and villages are back under the control of the same corrupt officials the Taliban won cheers for chasing out a decade ago. Farmers have fallen victim to a poppy eradication program accompanied by no realistic plans for alternative economic development…

What Washington needs to do is fight a lot smarter…. (NYT, 6/1)

Imperialist US was never beloved

To the editor:

While I thought the article on Helen Thomas was good…I do have one question. She said: "We are despised when we were once beloved." I would like to know when in the history of the United States that was, exactly. In her own experience it was not during the 60s and 70s because of Vietnam. It wasn't during the 80s because the US did business with South Africa during apartheid. Nor was it during the 50s with South American countries and notably Cuba. As for the 40s, the US took its time in entering the war, and how many of us are going to remember that? Especially if one reads John Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath where men were executed as Commies merely for seeking five cents extra for harvesting oranges.

If anyone can tell me when the US was beloved rather than despised, I look forward to the debate. (GW, 6/1)

Imperialism, Not 'Human Nature' Makes War Inevitable

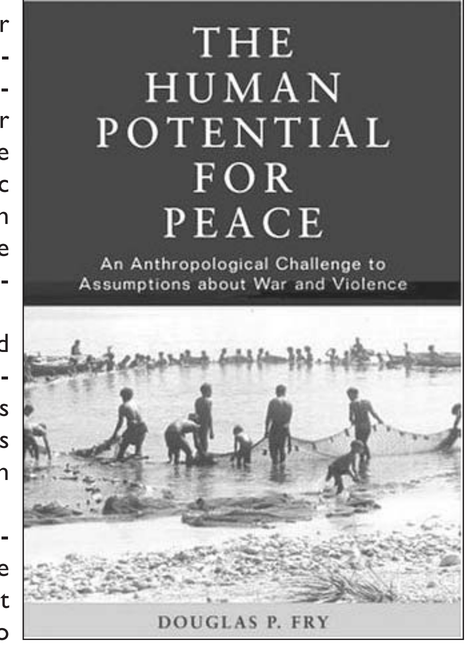
"The Human Potential for Peace," by Douglas P. Fry; Oxford University Press, New York, 2006.

This is an anthropological tour through hundreds of different societies, past and present, showing the many ways conflicts are resolved. Fry is a researcher and professor of developmental psychology, as well as anthropology. His book shows that, contrary to the generally accepted belief, war — as one of many means of conflict resolution — is an exception among human societies.

Fry grants that conflict among and between humans, as well as other animals, is present in all societies. But the key issue is how people deal with conflict.

Fry describes the evolution of societies from simple nomadic hunter/gatherer bands, to tribes that have leaders who command respect but are not permitted to command people, to chiefdoms in which leaders are permitted to command people, to states in which classes have conflicting relationships to the means of production and to each other and in which governments routinely command people. These four types of social formations range in size, complexity and in basic economic activity from hunting/gathering to agriculture and breeding animals to manufacture.

Fry draws on mountains of evidence from archeologists, who investigate past societies through their artifacts, and from other anthropologists, who live for years with the peoples in present-day societies and write ethnographies to describe their customs and relationships. He and many other anthropologists find that throughout 99% of the million years of existence of hominids (humans and our human-like predecessors), people have been organized into nomadic hunter/gatherer bands. War, although not conflict, is absent from these societies, both in the past and currently.



It's only in the last several thousand years, less than 1% of hominid existence, that more complex societies have arisen. Along with them war has often — though not always — been used to resolve conflicts.

The main lesson is that, while conflict may be part of all animal life (including human), war is not. Conflict resolution that does not resort to war, or even necessarily to violence, is the rule throughout human existence. War is the more recent exception, though in today's world that may be hard to believe.

The main weakness of Fry's book is his failure to examine the causes of war in modern capitalist society, namely imperialist competition for theft of resources, for command over the labor of others and for control of markets. So while he correctly concludes that it's possible to abolish war, he fails to show how capitalism prevents that abolition.

It's easy to see why capitalists pay handsomely for academics to corrupt their research and write millions of pages claiming that "war is inevitable" wherever there are people, regardless of social system. Those who toe this line get job security, promotions, research grants, publishing outlets and widespread publicity for their books and articles. Meanwhile those who oppose it are used to "prove" that there's "free speech" under capitalism. There is no winning in this arena, as long as a ruthless capitalist ruling class determines the prevailing ideology, defining what is conventional wisdom and painting everything else as delusional wishful thinking.

Despite its weaknesses, however, Fry's book is very useful to help counter the big "war-is-human-nature" lie. It helps show that humans can indeed abolish war but, contrary to Fry, can do so only a lengthy period after capitalism is abolished and replaced by communism. And, as CHALLENGE always notes, that transition will require revolutionary means — a war of a particular sort, in which the world's working class eliminates the world's capitalists and their mercenaries.✪

Capitalism is the REAL 'Inconvenient Truth'

"An Inconvenient Truth," Al Gore's film presents a frightening scenario about the effects of global warming – the process of the sun's rays and heat trapped within earth's atmosphere, thereby raising the temperature of the earth, melting the polar ice caps and raising the sea levels around the world. The science is clearly explained and the graphics are well done. No matter how much you think you already know, the shots of large ice masses melting in 35-day periods and depictions of the consequences of rising sea levels are startling.

As an interesting note: A positive aspect of the movie is that it clearly points to the science presented for the future of the earth's enviroment, debunking religious rationalizations that are put forward when catastrophes occur (ie, the result of an angry god.)

The movie also makes clear that the science predicting global warming has been around for decades, but has been suppressed. Also documented is the major contribution of the U.S. to the problem and its resistance to change.

But nowhere does Gore address the causes of this inaction. Neither industry nor profits nor greed nor capitalism is ever mentioned. We get no clue why the Kyoto treaty, designed to decrease global warming, was signed by every country except the U.S. and Australia. There is no discussion of why cars still run on gasoline when they could use ethanol made from corn. There's no mention of why industry has not cleaned up its act. Gore says only that legislators are "slow to change their minds."

It's clear this is a film to promote Al Gore and the liberal bosses. He is on camera the whole time, does not interview others and spends about 30 minutes on personal stories taken straight from his campaign ads. The movie opportunistically uses the examples of Hurricane Katrina as an example of disaster to gain support among black workers.



The Democrats have a big problem. Although the Republicans are in deep trouble, the Dems either don't disagree with them or want to do worse — build a bigger army to prepare for wider war with China (see editorial, page 1); preserve U.S. control of world energy resources; increase police powers and control of the civilian population. Both parties voted for the Iraq war and the Patriot Act. But the environment, there's an issue where they can at least appear to differ from the Republicans. Moreover, the party is desperate to find a candidate other than Hillary. Maybe a rehabilitated Gore will do.

Some facts in this movie are good to know and discuss. In the end, "An Inconvenient Truth" suggests that we are all culprits causing global warming. Individuals are told to plant trees, write letters, pray and engage in other personal activities.

But as long as capitalism exists and is bound to maximize profits, there's no hope for any effective long-range planning to save the environment. U.S. imperialism poses the greatest danger to the world, both by its contamination of the environment and its commitment to controlling the world's resources for profit. Al Gore's election won't change this.✪

FORWARD TO ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ COMMUNISM

Fatal Errors in Soviet Union's Early Years

Part 3

Contradictions sharpened in the Moscow of 1922, where U.S. communist Anna Louise Strong returned to resume her journalism. In her book, "I Change Worlds," she explains, "The Moscow to which I returned as Hearst correspondent in the late spring seemed to have changed in my three months' absence, from a city of comrades living on rations to a city of profiteers charging fantastic prices. The latter world was by far more conspicuous; the earlier world of comrades creating [amidst] chaos had to be looked for and was hard to find. The surface of life was ruthless competition and limitless profit-grabbing."

How could this happen? At that time, the Soviet Communist Party leadership believed that the struggle toward communism meant developing first a socialist society. They believed that money, profits and incentive wage scales would maximize production and eventually lead to a surplus. They thought communism could not be built without the production of this surplus. The problem was that this approach was characteristic of capitalism, the very system they were trying to escape.

One of Strong's first interviews was with Krasnoschekoff, a leader of guerilla forces during the war of capitalist intervention (1918-1921). He later became Assistant Commissar of Finance in Moscow. "Tell me," she asked, "how am I supposed to regard all these shops that are opening? To me each seems a step of defeat...must one be glad of this?"

He explained, "When by extreme revolutionary spirit, workers managed to produce without first being fed, in the hope of giving goods to the peasant and getting bread, their goods went not to the peasant but to the war. If, under interest or compulsion the peasants gave us food and trusted to later returns, that food went not into production but into the army. Then we had two years of drought ending in famine."

Neither Krasnoschekoff nor Strong advanced the political understanding that should have been developed during these years of extreme scarcity: Instead of explaining how the workers in the fields (peasants) and the workers in the factories had the same interests, the Party appealed on one basis to the factory workers (bread and money), and on another to the farm workers ("Peace, Land and Bread").

Krasnoschekoff continued, "We must say frankly to the people, 'Your government cannot feed all and produce goods for all. We shall run the most necessary industries and feed the workers in those industries. The rest of you must feed yourselves in any way you can.' This means we must allow private trade and private workshops; it is well if they succeed enough to feed those people who work in them, since no one else can feed them. Later, as state industries produce a surplus, these will expand and drive out private trade."

Strong says, "In fact, state industries as were able to do so profiteered even more shamelessly than the private capitalists, since they had less to fear. Were such state trusts, I wondered, really socialistic?"

She was also disturbed by "American businessmen [who] came to negotiate for concessions. They were chiefly of a flashy type, adventuring into the wild lands of Russia in hope of quick gain." These greed-driven profit-seekers were in extreme contrast to the U.S. workers she met, many of them communists, who came to the USSR not to profit but to help build the new society.

(Next: the dedication of these U.S. workers and some of the monumental obstacles to building the kind of society they desired.)✪